

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION PM-03

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 AF-04 NSC-05 NSCE-00 INR-05

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FM AMEMBASSY PORT LOUIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5744

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI PRIORITY

S E C R E T PORT LOUIS 0209

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PDEV PFAJ US SE MP

SUBJECT: TRIPARTITE NEGOTIATIONS ON SEYCHELLES: MAURITIAN
REQUEST TO PARTICIPATE

1. IN PRIVATE MEETING MARCH 2 PRIME MINISTER RAMGOOLAM INFORMED ME THAT LAST WEEK HE HAD SPECIFICALLY REQUESTED BRITISH HIGH COMMISSIONER TO SEEK APPROVAL OF UKG FOR RAMGOOLAM HIMSELF OR GOM REPRESENTATIVE TO PARTICIPATE IN TRIPARTITE NEGOTIATIONS ABOUT SEYCHELLES INDEPENDENCE. RAMGOOLAM THEN ASKED ME TO RELAY SAME REQUEST TO WASHINGTON. RAMGOOLAM SAID HE FELT HIS GOVERNMENT HAD LEGITIMATE SPECIFIC INTERESTS IN THOSE NEGOTIATIONS, PARTICULARLY IN REGARD TO PROSPECTIVE BOUNDARIES OF SEYCHELLES UPON INDEPENDENCE AND MAURITIAN INTERESTS IN MARINE AND MINERAL RESOURCES IN AREA ADJACENT TO SEYCHELLES. HE ALSO EXPRESSED INTEREST IN FUTURE DISPOSITION ALDABRA, DESROCHES AND FARQUHAR, REITERATING HIS CONSISTENT POSITION (PORT LOUIS 856) THAT THEY SHOULD BE TURNED OVER TO SEYCHELLES UPON INDEPENDENCE. IN NEXT BREATH HE VOLUNTEERED THAT HE WANTED TO GIVE US ABSOLUTE CATEGORIC ASSURANCE THAT HIS ADMINISTRATION HAD NO DESIRE OR INTENTION TO ASK FOR RETURN OF DIEGO GARCIA.

2. BY WAY OF UNDERLINING SERIOUSNESS OF HIS REQUEST, HE STRESSED THAT BY BEING GIVEN AN OPPORTUNITY TO REPRESENT MAURITIAN

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INTERESTS RELATIVE TO THE SEYCHELLES IN THOSE NEGOTIATIONS, HE

AND HIS ADMINISTRATION WOULD BE IN A BETTER POSITION TO COPE WITH COMMUNIST INROADS AND PRESSURES WHICH ARE BECOMING MORE SERIOUS FOR MAURITIUS AND OTHER PARTS OF THIS AREA, E.G., NOW IN MADAGASCAR AND LATER IN THE SEYCHELLES ITSELF, IN THE COMORES AND ELSEWHERE.

3. I PROMISED ONLY THAT I WOULD RELAY HIS REQUEST AS HE HAD PRESENTED IT.

4. UK HIGH COMMISSIONER BRIND INFORMED ME MARCH 3 THAT HE HAD PASSED RAMGOOLAM'S REQUEST TO FOREIGN OFFICE IN LONDON. FOREIGN OFFICE REPLIED TO BRIND THAT UKG DOES NOT CONSIDER IT APPROPRIATE OR NECESSARY FOR MAURITIAN REPRESENTATIVE TO PARTICIPATE EVEN AS OBSERVER IN TRIPARTITE TALKS SCHEDULED FOR LATER THIS MONTH (LONDON 3271), BECAUSE DISCUSSIONS WILL BE AT WORKING LEVEL AND CONCERNED MAINLY WITH ARRANGEMENTS FOR THREE ISLANDS AND TECHNICAL LEGAL MATTERS. BRIND SO INFORMED RAMGOOLAM MARCH 3. ACCORDING TO BRIND, RAMGOOLAM RECEIVED BRITISH TURN-DOWN PASSIVELY WITHOUT INDICATING WHETHER OR NOT HE WOULD PURSUE MATTER FURTHER NOR THAT HE HAD RAISED MATTER WITH ME. MEANWHILE I HAD INFORMED BRIND OF RAMGOOLAM'S REQUEST TO US AND THAT I WOULD BE INFORMING DEPARTMENT AND AMEMB LONDON.

5. WHILE IT MAY NOT BE DESIRABLE OR PRACTICAL TO ALLOW RAMGOOLAM TO INJECT HIMSELF DIRECTLY INTO TRIPARTITE TALKS, I THINK IT SHOULD BE RECOGNIZED THAT RAMGOOLAM HAS SOME SERIOUS ECONOMIC AND SOME, PERHAPS SELFISH, POLITICAL REASONS FOR MAKING HIS PITCH. FOR EXAMPLE, I BELIEVE HE IS IN DEAD EARNEST ABOUT PROTECTING AND PROMOTING THE MAURITIAN CLAIM TO THE SAYA DE MALHA BANKS AREA AND THEIR POTENTIAL RESOURCES, TO WHICH MANCHAM HAS ALSO LAID CLAIM. I DO NOT BELIEVE IT WOULD BE WISE TO TOTALLY IGNORE RAMGOOLAM'S INTEREST AND SIMPLY GIVE HIM A FLAT BRUSHOFF. INSTEAD, I WOULD SUGGEST HE BE KEPT INFORMED ABOUT ARRANGMENTS BEING MADE PRIOR TO THE SEYCHELLES INDEPENDENCE IN SOME TACTFUL WAY WHICH WOULD GIVE SOME RECOGNITION TO HIS PRACTICAL INTERESTS WITHOUT ENCOURAGING HIM TO INTERFERE WITH THE NEGOTIATIONS THEMSELVES. I ASSUME THIS COULD ONLY BE DONE IN COLLABORATION WITH UKG OF COURSE. PLEASE ADVISE.
MANHARD

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NNN

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